

# Wetlands Functions and Values

They stop floods, filter out pollution and replenish drinking supplies.

--SOURCE OF PHOTOSYNTHESIS and BENEFICIAL NUTRIENTS. Fisheries, migrating birds and species seeking seasonal habitats are nourished by wetlands.

--FLOOD REGULATION Wetlands control of rain, snowmelt and floodwater releases is a more effective and less costly mitigation than man-made dams. High flood risks will continue to increase as wetlands are lost and degraded.

--GROUNDWATER RECHARGE Wetlands re-supply nature's water storage tanks.

--FILTRATION. Wetlands absorption of nitrogen and phosphorous provides cleaner water downstream for drinking water supplies, aquifers and reservoirs. As well, silt deposits from upstream erosion are settled out, filtered and trapped.

--CLIMATE REGULATION. Wetlands absorption of heat during the day and release of heat at night moderates local climates.

--CARBON SEQUESTRATION. Many wetlands -- especially those that are forested or defined by organic soils-- harbor carbon within their plant communities and soils and thus reduce climate change effects.

--SUSTENANCE PROVISION. Wetlands have traditionally supplied food, water, fiber, medicinal products and timber for construction and fuel.

--CULTURAL VALUES. Aesthetic, spiritual, recreational and educational values of wetlands have nourished human populations through the ages.